

Serial No. 10/719,525, filed 11/21/03

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) An axle comprising:
an axle housing ~~including a surface~~;
a cover having a generally dome-shaped portion having a first thickness, said dome-shaped portion terminating in a perimeter edge having a second thickness greater than said first thickness, said perimeter edge including a height ~~extending from said surface and in a direction away from said surface~~, said height greater than said first thickness, wherein said perimeter edge provides a weld surface; and
a weld bead securing said perimeter edge to said ~~surface of said~~ axle housing.
2. (Currently Amended) The ~~cover axle~~ according to claim 1, wherein said second thickness is up to approximately twice said first thickness.
3. (Currently Amended) The ~~axle cover~~ according to claim 1, wherein said dome-shaped portion includes a plurality of reinforcing ribs protruding therefrom.
4. (Currently Amended) The ~~axle cover~~ according to claim 3, wherein said ~~plurality of reinforcing ribs~~ are arranged radially about said dome-shaped portion.
5. (Withdrawn/Currently Amended) The ~~axle cover~~ according to claim 1, wherein said dome-shaped portion includes a concave exterior surface, and said perimeter edge is a flange extending radially outwardly from said concave exterior surface.

Serial No. 10/719,525, filed 11/21/03

6. (Withdrawn/Currently Amended) The ~~axle cover~~ according to claim 5, wherein said flange is defined by a portion of said dome-shaped portion folded back onto itself.

7. (Withdrawn/Currently Amended) The ~~axle cover~~ according to claim 6, wherein said weld surface is a machined circumference of said flange.

8. (Currently Amended) The ~~axle cover~~ according to claim 1, wherein said dome-shaped portion includes a recessed boss with an opening for receiving a carrier.

9. (Currently Amended) The ~~axle cover~~ according to claim 1, wherein dome-shaped portion includes a concave exterior surface with said perimeter edge defined by a terminal portion of said concave exterior surface.

10.-17. (Cancelled)

Serial No. 10/719,525, filed 11/21/03

18. (Currently Amended) An axle housing cover for securing to an axle housing comprising:

a generally dome-shaped portion having a first thickness, said dome-shaped portion terminating in a terminal end for engaging the axle housing, said dome-shaped portion including an outer perimeter edge adjacent to said terminal end and having a second thickness different than said first thickness, said outer perimeter edge lying within a boundary tangential to said dome-shaped portion immediately adjacent to said outer perimeter edge providing a weld surface for receiving a weld bead for securing the cover to the axle housing.

19. (Currently Amended) An axle housing cover for securing to an axle housing comprising:

a generally dome-shaped portion having a first thickness, said dome-shaped portion terminating in a terminal end for engaging the axle housing, said dome-shaped portion including an outer perimeter edge adjacent to said terminal end without extending radially outwardly from said dome-shaped portion and having a second thickness different than said first thickness, said perimeter edge providing a weld surface for receiving a weld bead for securing the cover to the axle housing.

20. (Currently Amended) The axle housing cover according to claim 18, wherein the second thickness is greater than said first thickness, said ~~second thickness outer perimeter edge~~ having a height greater than said first thickness.